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QUASAR™

IN A STRANGER WORLD!

CROSSOVER

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DIRECT EDITION

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A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL SOMEWHERE...

SINCE HIS DISCHARGE FROM THE SERVICE OVER EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, THE **PATIENT** HAS LAIN IN THIS 12' X 12' CUBICLE, **SLEEPING** TWENTY HOURS A DAY...

EVEN WHEN HE IS **AWAKENED** FOR HIS MEALS, HIS MANDATORY EXERCISE, AND HIS TOILET, HE KEEPS HIS **SILENCE**, EVINCING **NO EMOTION**... NO NEED EXCEPT TO RETURN TO HIS **BED**...

FOR IN SLEEP, THERE ARE DREAMS, AND DREAMS ARE WHERE HE WOULD MUCH **PREFER** TO SPEND THE REMAINDER OF HIS LIFE...

WHEN HE WAS **AWAKE**, TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENED TO HIM. WHEN HE IS **ASLEEP**, THE TERRIBLE THINGS REMAIN **AT BAY**...

IT WOULD TAKE SOMETHING **UNIMAGININGLY DIRE** FOR HIM TO VOLUNTARILY TRAVERSE THE WAKING WORLD ONCE MORE...

THEY'RE COMING!

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AT THAT MOMENT, FAR, FAR AWAY, A STARSHIP OF THE SHI 'AR IMPERIAL FLEET WARPS THROUGH THE SOLAR SYSTEM'S MAJOR STARGATE...

ABOARD STAND NINE HEROES OF EARTH WHO HAVE COMMANDEERED THE SHIP IN ORDER TO PURSUE AN ALIEN VESSEL THROUGH THE STARGATE...

THE UNIDENTIFIED ALIENS HAVE KIDNAPPED A WOMAN OF EARTH WHO POSSESSES THE MOST SIGNIFICANT NEW POWER SOURCE IN ALL THE COSMOS, AS WELL AS BEING QUASAR'S SIGNIFICANT OTHER...

PERUN

VANGUARD

DARKSTAR

BINARY

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

QUASAR IN A STRANGER LAND

THE SHI'AR DO NOT SUFFER THE INTRUDERS GLADLY.

LOOK AT THE *SCREEN!* SOMETHING'S *NOT RIGHT!* I'VE FLOWN THE GATE-PATH *MANY* TIMES AND I'VE NEVER SEEN *ANYTHING* LIKE THIS!

QUASAR

SOUNDS LIKE WE'RE *LOSING POWER!* COULD OUR QUARRY HAVE SET SOME SORT OF *BOOBY TRAP* FOR US?!?

CAPTAIN MARVEL

<THAT SOUND -- THE *ENGINES* ARE CUTTING OUT! THE EARTHERS HAVE *DONE* SOMETHING!>

BLACK BOLT

CAPTAIN, ASSUME THE *COMMAND.* I'M GOING TO *QUANTUM-JUMP* OUTSIDE AND CHECK IT OUT!

LOCKJAW

IKARIS

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<WHERE ARE YOU TWO GOING?>

<THIS IS *OUR* VESSEL CAUGHT INSIDE THE GATE *STARBOLT!* THOUGH WE HAVE ALLOWED *QUASAR'S PEOPLE* TO THINK THEY ARE IN CHARGE-->

<--IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO THIS *VESSEL*, IT IS THE IMPERIAL GUARD WHO MUST ANSWER TO *HER MAJESTRIX!*>

*IN MOMENTS, THE TELEPORTER VOYAGER AND HIS TRACKER MOONDANCER HAVE JOINED QUASAR OUTSIDE THE SHIP...

*...AND WHEN QUASAR IS UNABLE TO ASCERTAIN WHAT IS STALLING THE SHI'AR VESSEL FROM IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE...

*TRANSLATED FROM SHI'AR.-- MI'KAR

I GOT COMPANY, I SEE.

SOME SORT OF POWER-DAMPENING DEVICE, BY THE LOOK OF ITS ENERGY SIGNATURE!

I'VE GOT TO GET IT AWAY FROM HERE-- BEFORE IT--!

I THINK MY PROBE MAY HAVE ACTIVATED IT!

HEY, WAIT-- THERE'S SOME SORT OF ANTI-MATTER DEVICE AT ITS CORE! A BOMB--?!?

AND...

I'M BACK OUTSIDE THE GATE WHERE WE WENT IN TO SEE--

--UH OH! WHAT'S THAT?

...HE QUANTUM JUMPS STILL **FURTHER**, WITH THE TWO SHI'AR WARRIORS LOCKSTEPPED IN HIS WAKE...!

UNBIDDEN, VOYAGER HELPS QUASAR OPEN A SPACE PORTAL LARGE ENOUGH TO CONTAIN THE DEVICE --

FREE FROM THE DAMPENING DEVICE'S GRIP, THE SHI'AR SHIP SUDDENLY REGAINS ITS **INERTIA** AND CAREENS DOWN THE **WARP TUNNEL!**

WHOA! THERE GOES **THE SHIP!**

IT'S **SAFE**, IN NO SMALL PART THANKS TO THIS **VOYAGER** FELLOW...

I WONDER... COULD I HAVE SHUNTED IT AWAY QUICKLY ENOUGH **ALONE...?**

--SO THAT WHEN DETONATION OCCURS MOMENTS LATER, THE DEVICE IS LIGHT YEARS FROM THE OPENING OF THE STARGATE.

AT THAT MOMENT SEVERAL LIGHT YEARS AWAY, ON THE **LABORATORY WORLD** OF THE ENIGMATIC EX-PERIMENTER KNOWN ONLY AS THE **STRANGER**...

I HAVE ANALYZED SCORES OF **EARTH BEINGS**. OF WHAT INTEREST IS **THIS ONE** TO ME?

DO NOT BE **DISINGENUOUS** GREAT STRANGER! SURELY YOUR INSTRUMENTS DETECT THE PULSE OF **ANOMALOUS ENERGY** RESIDING WITHIN ITS FORM.

YES, **SKELETRON**. SO THEY **DO**.

WE CALL IT THE **STARBRAND** FOR IT LOOKS LIKE A COSMETIC BODY MARKING IN THE STYLIZED SHAPE OF A **STAR**. SEE, BEHIND ITS **NECK**?

THIS STARBRAND I BELIEVE TO BE FROM **ANOTHER UNIVERSE** SO FAR FROM THIS ONE THAT NONE OF ITS **PHYSICAL PROPERTIES** RESEMBLE OURS.

HOW THIS EARTH BEING CAME TO **ACQUIRE** THIS POWER SOURCE HAS TO DO WITH THE EARTH BEING **QUASAR**. YOU HAVE HEARD OF **HIM** I'M SURE.

THIS IS A *BARGAIN* I AM OFFERING YOU, STRANGER. USE YOUR VAST RESOURCES TO *EXAMINE* THE POWER SOURCE-- *REMOVE* IT FROM ITS HOST--

--DETERMINE WHERE IT IS *FROM* AND HOW I MIGHT *GET THERE*...

...AND YOU MAY *KEEP* THE BRAND.

WHY DOES ITS *PLACE OF ORIGIN* INTEREST YOU SO MUCH? DO YOU EXPECT THAT THERE ARE *MANY* SUCH POWER OBJECTS THERE?

PERHAPS. PERHAPS *NOT*. DO WE HAVE A *DEAL*?

WE DO.

GOOD. THEN I WILL LEAVE YOU TO YOUR *WORK*. SUMMON ME IF YOU REQUIRE ANYTHING. I WILL BE IN MY *SHIP*.

ACKNOWLEDGED.

AHEAD OF SKELETRON, AT THE SPACEPORT...

<COME ON, *SKAR*! PIN THAT FOUR-ARMED *FREAK*!>

<DON'T LET ME DOWN, *GODABAC*! I HAVE CURRENCY DEPENDENT UPON YOUR PERFORMANCE!>

* TRANSLATED FROM THE ALIEN ARGOT - Migo

(WHAT--?)
(IT IS NYGORN! LET US DOWN, MARVANITE!)
(IF YOU TWO HAVE THAT MUCH ENERGY TO SPARE, YOU SHOULD BE USING IT TO EXPLORE THIS CURIO-WORLD.)

(WE'RE HONING OUR BATTLE SKILLS, GIANT! YOU SHOULD THINK OF DOING THE SAME!)
(FAH! I AM AS SKILLED AS I EVER NEED BE!)

(EXPLORE, LARGE ONE? YOU DO MEAN PLUNDER, DON'T YOU?)
(SKELETRON IS HERE TO NEGOTIATE, NOT PLUNDER. HE WOULD BE VERY PERTURBED WERE WE TO--)
(I DO NOT FEAR SKELETRON. I GO TO EXPLORE. ANYONE BOLD ENOUGH TO JOIN ME? ZARDROX?)
(I'LL GO WITH YOU.)

(FEEL FREE TO INFORM ON US TO THE MIGHTY SKELETRON.)

ELSEWHERE...

--A VERY DISTURBING DREAM, DOCTOR. I... BELIEVE IT TO BE PRE-COGNITIVE!

WHAT WAS IT, KEITH? WHAT WAS SO COMPELLING THAT YOU BROUGHT IT OUT OF YOURSELF!

IT'S GOING TO SOUND WEIRD, DOC, I KNOW, BUT THERE ARE... FORCES... FROM ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE ON THEIR WAY HERE!

I SEE.

NO, YOU DON'T SEE. YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE GLAD THAT I SNAPPED OUT OF MY VEGETABLE STATE!

WE'RE GOING TO BE INVADED, DOC! YOU MUST BELIEVE ME! YOU KNOW ABOUT MY ABILITIES--

LOOK, KEITH... I WON'T CLOSE MY MIND TO ANYTHING! NOT WITH ALL THOSE PREPOSTEROUS PARANORMALS RUNNING AROUND, BUT--

WELL, IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?

WE'VE GOT TO WARN THE WORLD-- THE PRESIDENT-- OUR MOST POWERFUL PARANORMALS!

DR. CLOW-- YOU WANT WE SHOULD--?

KEITH, I'M HAPPY YOU'VE BECOME MOTIVATED AGAIN.

AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS, I WAS BEGINNING TO LOSE HOPE--

--THAT YOU'D EVER GET OVER YOUR GUILT OVER WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE WAR...

FORGET IT, DOC. FORGET IT. WHAT'S COMING IS GOING TO MAKE THE WAR LOOK LIKE A PICNIC--

--AND IF YOU DON'T THINK WE SHOULD DO ANYTHING, FINE BY ME!

SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE STARGATE...

OKAY, WE'RE PAST THAT LITTLE BOOBY-TRAP--

--AND I JUST GOT A GOOD LOCK ON THE STARBRAND SIGNATURE TRAIL!

HAVE YOUR PILOT SET YOUR COURSE AS FOLLOWS, GLADIATOR...

--THANKS IN PART TO YOUR FELLOW SHI'ARS--

AND... LOOK, GLADIATOR. I'M SORRY ABOUT THE HASSLE, LS EARTH GUYS TAKING COMMAND OF YOUR SHIP AND ALL! BUT YOU CAN'T BELIEVE HOW BIG THIS STARBRAND DEAL IS.

YOU GET MY LITTLE POSSE IN THE VICINITY OF IT AND WE'LL LEAVE PEACEABLY, OKAY?

AGREED. THOUGH YOU MAY STILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR VIOLATIONS OF SHI'AR LAW.

RIGHT. JERK

SICKBAY...

CAPTAIN MARVEL, HOW'S HYPERION?

ASK HIM YOURSELF, HE'S RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS.*

PHYSICALLY... I'M HEALING, BUT I FEEL ROTTEN THAT I LET YOU DOWN AND LET THAT ALIEN GET THE BETTER OF ME!

*AFTER HAVING HIS NECK BROKEN BY GLADIATOR LAST ISSUE. --Doc Rock

HEY, WE ALL HAVE OUR HEADS HANDED TO US NOW AND THEN.

JUST DO ME A FAVOR AND GET BETTER. ZARDA WILL KILL ME IF I BRING HER FIANCE HOME ALL BUSTED UP!

QUASAR... I WANTED TO *MENTION* SOMETHING. THAT SHI'AR OVER THERE... ?

MANTA, WASN'T IT?

YES, I BELIEVE SO. I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THE *COMA* SHE'S IN. WE WERE *FIGHTING*..,* HER POWER AND MINE--THERE WAS SOME SORT OF *FEEDBACK EFFECT*--

* SEE STARBLAST #2-- Ployyo

--THAT AS FAR AS I CAN TELL HAS SOMEHOW RESTORED MY *CONTROL* OVER THE FULL ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM--!

STILL CAN'T *TURN INTO IT* LIKE I USED TO, BUT--

QUASAR! REPORT TO THE COMMAND DECK!

GOT TO *EXCUSE ME*, MONICA.

AND...

AHEAD APPEARS TO BE THE *WORLD* WHERE THIS STAR-BRAND WAS TAKEN, EARTHMAN.

ALREADY, HUH? HEY, IT LOOKS...VAGUELY *FAMILIAR*.

TO *ME* AS WELL, GLAD ATOR!

THIS IS THE WORLD OF THE *STRANGER*--WHERE *VOYAGER*, *MOONDANCER*, AND I WERE *IMPRISONED* FOR COUNTLESS ROTATIONS!

WE CAN GO *NO FURTHER*, QUASAR.

WE HAVE AN *IMPERIAL TREATY* WITH THE STRANGER. IF WE LEAVE THE STRANGER'S WORLDS *ALONE*--

--NO *SHI'AR CITIZEN* WILL EVER BE A SUBJECT OF HIS *EXPERIMENTATION* AGAIN!

HMM!

OKAY THEN *GLADIATOR*... *SOLAR WIND* I GUESS THIS IS WHERE WE *PART COMPANY*.

I'LL ASSEMBLE MY *TROOPS*, AND WE'RE *OUT* OF HERE.

AND...

EVERYONE JOIN HANDS WITH SOMEONE WHO *TELEPORTS*!

DO YOU *MIND*, DARKSTAR?

NO, *IKARIS*.

SILENT ONE! PERUN WOULD WALK YOUR *DOG* WITH YOU-- *HO-HO!*

HYPERION'S STILL NOT IN ANY SHAPE TO *TRAVEL*. WE'LL HAVE TO COME *BACK* FOR HIM.

THANKS FOR THE *LIFT*, SHI'AR!

(IMPERTINENT EARTHMAN. I DO NOT *LIKE* HIM.)

AND ABOARD SKELETRON'S SHIP, IN THE CHAMBER OF HIS MOST TRUSTED AIDE FABRIKANT...

(WHAT IS THIS? *INCOMING LIFEFORMS!*

(COULD THOSE EARTHERS HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH MY *STARGATE BLOCKADE*? SKELETRON MUST BE *NOTIFIED!*)

THE STRANGER'S PLANET...

I'VE *BEEN* HERE BEFORE WE'RE LOOKING FOR A *HUGE DODECAHEDRON!*

THE WAY QUASAR CONSTANTLY ASSUMES COMMAND IS *ANNOYING*, NO?

YES, MY BROTHER.

BIZARRE *VISITS*, EH, SILENT ONE?

JUST THEN-!

<COME NO FURTHER!>

WHOA! WHERE'D *HE* COME FROM?!?

BINARY-MARVEL! SUBDUE HIM!

I'M GOING ON!

OKAY-- NOW LET'S GIVE MY NEW ENERGY-MANIPULATING POWERS A REAL *WORKOUT!*

HE'S ATTACK-ING!

DON'T HOLD BACK!

THAT IS THE *STRANGER?!?*

NO. I *MET* HIM ONCE.

THE WOMEN SEEM TO HAVE HIM *AT BAY.* WE CAN FOLLOW *QUASAR!*

HOSTILE ALIENS! WHAT *UNEXPECTED PLEASURE!*

FRRRP

GHHHHH!

<FABRIKANT WAS RIGHT! THE EARTHERS!>

I HAVEN'T KILLED ANYONE IN MANY ROTATIONS! I RELISH THE NEXT FEW MINUTES!>

AEEEEEEE!

<MORSELS! THREKKER SHALL FEAST!>

MIKHAIL--!

I CAN HANDLE *THIS* BEAST, LAYNIA-- GO HELP *SOMEONE ELSE!*

OH-- OKAY.

POOM!

ENOUGH OF THIS IMPERTINENCE!

EHHH!

BINARY!

LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU SHOOT WHEN YOU CANNOT *SEE*, GIANT!

(???)

OH, WOE IS *ME*! THE ROCK CREATURE HAS DEALT ME A *RESOUNDING BLOW*! NOW HE COMES TO *FINISH ME OFF*!

OH, WHAT SHALL POOR PERUN *DO*?

(WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE*?)

BESIDES BOMBARD THEE WITH THE FURY OF THE *LIGHTNING*, THAT IS? HO HO *HO*!

I DO NOT *UNDERSTAND* IT!

MINE IS THE POWER TO *REPULSE* ALL ENERGIES USED AGAINST ME--

--BUT I AM UNABLE TO BRING IT TO BEAR AGAINST THIS GRINNING JACKAL!

FURTHER, I AM LOSING MY ABILITY TO *FLY*!

(AS STRONG AS YOU *ARE*, EARTHER, YOU CANNOT BLOCK *ALL* THE WAYS I CAN ATTACK!)

ONCE MORE, AN UNIMAGINABLE DISTANCE AWAY...

DOCTOR WON'T *BELIEVE* ME... HE'S GOING TO BE *SORRY*... *EVERYONE'S* GOING TO, INCLUDING *ME* I GUESS...

I COULD JUST LET THE WORLD GO *HANG*, BUT THE CATASTROPHE SOON TO BEFALL THE EARTH WILL AFFECT *ME*, TOO.

I *COULD* DO SOMETHING... BUT IT WOULD MEAN MAKING PEACE WITH MY OTHER SELF/MY [redacted].

PUTTING MYSELF IN THE POSITION WHERE ONCE AGAIN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE COULD BE *AFFECTED* IF I *MESS UP* IN SOME WAY.

I DON'T SEE HOW I HAVE A *CHOICE*. IF I *FAIL* TO DO SOMETHING OR IF I TRY TO DO SOMETHING AND *FAIL*--EITHER WAY *I'LL STILL BE RESPONSIBLE!*

WHY I HAVE TO BE IN THIS POSITION; I'LL *NEVER* KNOW! I DIDN'T *ASK* FOR THIS RESPONSIBILITY!

BUT I GUESS I CAN HIDE AWAY INSIDE MY OWN *PRIVATE DREAMSCAPE* NO LONGER--I'M GOING TO HAVE TO *ACT* IF I EVER WANT TO KNOW *PEACEFUL SLEEP* AGAIN!

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO SUMMON

Nightmask

FROM THE RECESSES OF MY MIND, AND PRAY HE CAN DO SOMETHING TO SAVE THE *WAKING WORLD!*

ABOARD THE SHI'AR STARSHIP...

<NO! I FORBID YOU TO GO DOWN TO THE STRANGER'S WORLD! I CANNOT ALLOW THE THREE OF YOU TO JEOPARDIZE THE TREATY!>

<LISTEN, GLADIATOR, THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US.>

<THE THREE OF US--AND MAYBE OTHERS--WERE IMPRISONED AND EXPERIMENTED ON BY THE STRANGER FOR ALMOST THREE CYCLES!>

<HE DID UNSPEAKABLE THINGS TO US.>

<MORG THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE, WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTRACT VENGEANCE UPON HIM. WE MAY NEVER GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS!>

<I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU MUST BE FEELING, BUT YOUR DUTY TO THE IMPERIUM MUST COME FIRST!>

<IF THAT IS HOW YOU FEEL, PRAETOR-->

<--THEN TELL THE EMPRESS THAT SOLAR WIND, VOYAGER AND MOONDANCER HEREBY RESIGN FROM THE IMPERIAL GUARD!>

AND...

<MYLA! WHERE--?!>

<I GUIDED YOU TO WHERE THE GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF *EARTH PEOPLE* WERE! PERHAPS THE STRANGER IS *NEARBY!*

BLACK BOLT SILENTLY GRAPPLES WITH THE SWORDSMAN ***SKAR,*** POSITIONING HIM IN FRONT OF THE GIANT ***NYGORN***...

...WHISPERS THE MEREST SYLLABLE...

<IF I AID THE TERRANS IN THEIR SKIRMISHES WITH THESE NON-ENTITIES--

<--PERHAPS THEY WILL ASSIST US IN OUR *VENDETTA* AGAINST THIS WORLD'S *MASTER!*>

...AND SENDS HIS OPPONENT CAREENING TOWARD HIS GIGANTIC COMRADE-IN-ARMS ON A SHOCKWAVE EQUIVALENT TO A TON OF ***TNT!***

WHOOO

WHAT--?!

DON'T WORRY, BLUE ONE! YOU SHALL NOT BE *CRUSHED!*

THOOM

YOU *OKAY*, BINARY?

SOMEWHAT.

TELEPORTED? BY *WHOM?*

BY ME-- *VOYAGER!*

(SURRENDER, EARTHERS!)

(OR I WILL *DRAIN* THIS ONE OF EVERY LAST SPECK OF *LIFE FORCE!*)

MIKHAIL! NO!

NOT FAR...

I AM VERY NEARLY THROUGH WITH MY *ANALYSIS*, SKELETRON.

YOU ARE *SURE*? I DID NOT EXPECT IT TO GO SO *QUICKLY*!

I HAVE BEEN DOING SUCH PROCEDURES FOR *EONS*.

SO... CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE THIS STARBRAND IS *FROM*?

NOT WHILE IT IS STILL ON *HER PERSON*. I WILL HAVE TO *REMOVE* IT *FIRST*.

THEN *PROCEED*, GREAT SCIENTIST, PROCEED!

CLOSE BY...

THESE CORRIDORS ARE MADDENINGLY *COMPLEX*! I HAVE HALF A MIND TO *BURN RIGHT THROUGH THEM* ALL, BUT I'M AFRAID I MIGHT HIT A *REACTOR*, OR SOMETHING--!

HOLD ON, *MAYLA*, PLEASE HOLD ON! I'M GOING AS *FAST* AS I CAN!

AND OH HOW I'M GOING TO MAKE YOUR TORMENTORS *PAY*!!!

TO BE CONTINUED IN **STARBLAST** #3, ON SALE NOW!